

Expanding Acceptable Transfer Requirements: Transfer Instructions for Existing Email Messages with Attachments

1.0 PREFACE

As part of the National Archives and Records Administration's (NARA) e-Gov initiative, and in cooperation with other Federal agencies, NARA is issuing guidance intended to supplement existing requirements in 36 CFR 1228.270 for transferring electronic records to NARA. This guidance expands currently acceptable formats to allow the transfer of email messages and their attachments to NARA.

2.0 TRANSFER CRITERIA

In addition to ASCII text formats, NARA now will accept transfers of permanent email messages and their attachments (email records) to NARA in standard markup language, or in their native formats according to the following:

- 2.1 Transfers of email records must consist of an identifiable, organized body of records (not necessarily a traditional series, e.g., the email records of the Deputy Secretary from the past fiscal year). The records should be scheduled for transfer to NARA using the SF 115, Request for Records Disposition Authority, prior to transfer if an existing approved schedule does not exist.
- 2.2 Email transfers should come from email systems or from a DoD 5015.2-STD certified Records Management Application (RMA).¹ If you need to send them from some other kind of system, first contact NARA to see if we can accommodate it.
- 2.3 For preservation purposes, NARA prefers that agencies transfer email and their attachments in a markup language format that contains:
 - 2.3.1 Delimiters to indicate the beginning and end of each message and the beginning and end of each attachment, if any. Each attachment must be differentiated from the body of the message, and uniquely identified.
 - 2.3.2 Labels to identify each part of the message (Date, To [all recipients, including cc: and bc: copies], From, Subject, Body, and Attachment) including transmission and receipt information (Time Sent, Time Opened, Message Size, File Name, and similar information, if available). Agencies that use an email system that identifies users by codes or nicknames, or identifies addressees only by the name of a distribution list² should include information with the transfer-level documentation, to ensure identification of the sender and addressee(s).

¹ See <http://jirc.fhu.disa.mil/recmgt/register.htm> for a list of RMAs compliant with DoD 5015.2-STD.

² DoD 5015.2-STD (TABLE C2.T4.) Transmission and Receipt Data, Footnote 1 defines intelligent names as clear, uncoded, identifications of the individual.

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- 2.4 If a markup language cannot be produced, NARA will accept email messages and their attachments in their native formats. Each attachment should be labeled with its filename and the default file extension to indicate the proprietary software used to create the attachment. If attachment file names do not include the default file extension (e.g., .doc, .xls), agencies must provide documentation identifying the proprietary formats used to create each attachment.
- 2.5 At this time NARA will not accept email messages that have been converted to a Portable Document Format (PDF) or other image file format for purposes of transfer. NARA will develop transfer requirements for PDF and scanned images by March 31, 2003, as part of the Electronic Records Management Initiative.
- 2.6 Attachments to email messages may be transferred in their native formats, such as PDF, other image file formats, and common office automation formats.

3.0 TRANSFER DOCUMENTATION

This guidance supplements transfer documentation requirements in 36 CFR 1228.270(e) to ensure that each body of email records transferred to NARA is clearly described. For each transfer, agencies must separately supply documentation that identifies:

- Email application and version(s) (e.g., Microsoft Exchange v5.5)
- Operating system and version(s) (e.g., Microsoft Windows NT v4.0)
- RMA (if applicable) and version
- Total number of messages
- Total number of attachments
- List of message delimiters and definitions
- Structure used for each email item in the transfer (see Transfer Criteria 2.3.1-2.3.2)
- Arrangement of records in the transfer

Agencies must also submit a signed Standard Form 258, Agreement to Transfer Records to the National Archives of the United States, as required by 36 CFR 1228.272.

4.0 TRANSFER INFORMATION

- 4.1 For preservation processing purposes, NARA prefers that email transfers be contained within a single uncompressed file on any of the approved media listed in 36 CFR 1228.270(c).
- 4.2 Agencies may also transfer records on Type IV Digital Linear Tape or through File Transfer Protocol (FTP). FTP transfers currently are limited to a maximum size of five Gigabytes (5 GB). For FTP transfers, the offering agency must provide the following information to NARA:

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- IP address for the Agency FTP site,
- A temporary user name and temporary password for NARA to use in accessing the Agency FTP site,
- A designated time or time span for NARA to access the records and download a copy to NARA.

5.0 LEVELS OF ACCESS

NARA will provide access to agencies and, after review of the content for FOIA exemptions, to all researchers requesting email accessioned from Federal agencies. The level of access will vary according to the formats in which the email records were transferred. At the present time NARA provides users with a copy of fully releasable electronic record files on any of the media referenced in Section 4.0. For email messages and attachments transferred to NARA in proprietary formats (e.g., PDF, Microsoft Outlook), the user will be responsible for obtaining the necessary hardware and software to view the records.

6.0 CONTACT INFORMATION

For assistance in scheduling email contact your agency appraiser in the Life Cycle Management Division (NWML). The NWML general telephone number is 301-837-3560.

For technical assistance in transferring email records to NARA, contact the Electronic and Special Media Records Service Division (NWME), 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740. The general telephone number is 301-837-3420.
